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Sent: Thursday, November 21, 2024 4:31 PM
To: WilsonFrias, Cynthia (PUC) <Cynthia.WilsonFrias@puc.ri.gov>
Cc: Jennifer Wood <jwood@centerforjustice.org>
Subject: follow-up questions about RI Energy's AMR Opt-Out policies

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Hello Ms. Wilson-Frias,

You may remember that you and I corresponded about one year ago regarding RI Energy's policies and procedures for homeowners and business owners to opt out of the pending Smart Meter (AMF) deployment. Residents in the southern part of the state have recently been sent postcards by RI Energy explaining that the process will start there in early 2025. The information states that people will have the right to Opt Out (for a fee).

Unfortunately, at this time, prior to the Smart Meter rollout, Rhode Island residents in the southern part of the state, including those who are medically disabled by electromagnetic radiation, have recently informed me that there are problems in accessing the existing AMR Opt Out.

Customers are being pressured by RI Energy to accept a digital non-communicating meter, instead of a purely mechanical, analog, non-digital, non-RF radiation emitting meter, that has absolutely no computerized components. The analog meter is the only safe type of meter for those who already experience negative health effects from electromagnetic radiation. For the general public, unaware of a potential diagnosis of electromagnetic radiation sickness, there is no way to predict who or how many people would become ill once the digital meters are installed.

I am writing to you now because I need clarity on the types of meters that people who choose to Opt Out of the AMR meters will be offered. My understanding from watching the livestreamed RI PUC Hearings last spring and summer, is that Rhode Islanders would retain the right to choose from the three tiers of meter: electromechanical/analog meter, AMR meter, or AMF meter. This was the interpretation I made when you were questioning Mr. Hennegan and Mr. Walnock (from PPL Services), and Ms. Wood was questioning Mr. Walnock, on July 20, 2023 (pages 178-180, 191-192 from the transcript).

On page 180, lines 7-15, you asked:

Ok. So you'll have three different types of meters potentially out there: the AMI, the AMR that's manually read, and then the one that you'r putting in when people opt out of AMR?

MR. WALNOCK: Yes, the the ones that are AMR drive-by now, they could also be manually read; so they will become manually read.

But, to your point, it could be solid state, electromechanical, whatever they have.

On page 192, lines13-21, Ms. Wood asked:

Okay. I just wanted to make it very clear on the record that both will remain, and that there may be customers in the future state, were there to be full implementation of AMF, who would be getting a manual read on a meter that was not an electronically capable meter.

MR. WALNOCK: Correct. At the end of the day, it's either going to be a new AMF meter or a manual read. [which does not confirm that electromechanical/analog meters will be provided]

The AMR meter on my house has dials. Were these AMR meters originally analog meters that were retrofitted for drive-by readings, since they can and will be manually read going forward? Will the drive-by component be de-activated on all of these AMR meters if people choose to keep them?

For the 60% of the AMR meters that are aging out, what are the rights of consumers who, for medical reasons, do not want a digital meter, even if it is non-communicating? Negative health effects have also been documented from digital, non-communicating meters.

RI Energy has used the term "manually read meter," which after the deployment of the AMF meters will be used to refer to either an analog meter or an AMR meter, in that there will no longer be any drive-by readings. The non-communicating digital meter would presumably also be read manually. Thus there has been no assurance from RI Energy that customers will be able to retain or obtain an analog meter, which is the only type that is safe, as well as being accurate, with a 30-50 year lifespan.

As far as the additional fee for the manual meter reading going forward--When a customer calls RI Energy, there is a telephone prompt which says to press a certain number if you want to report your meter reading. In that case, what is the need for meter readers to read the meters manually on a monthly basis? Why couldn't the customer call in their reading and avoid the extra monthly fee?

I am reaching out to you because you have been very accommodating to those of us who have presented oral and written testimony opposed to the AMF deployment. I am hopeful that with your contacts at RI Energy, you can once again reach out to them and request that they clarify these points that I have raised. Thank you

Sincerely,

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